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NOTABLE CONTRIBUTIONS OF RUSSIAN GUN DESIGNERS TO THE
 DEVELOPMENT OF SOVIET TANK ARMAMENT

Eng-Col A. Shvarts

Before the beginning of World War II, our army had first-class tanks, armed with Degtyarev machine guns and the powerful 76-millimeter guns designed by Grabin. Our tank sights and observation instruments made possible an all-around field of view from the tank and accurate aiming of the guns.

The superiority of Soviet tank armament to that of the enemy was apparent in the first days of World War II. Great firepower, simplicity of construction of the guns, ease of servicing the guns, and training the crews in their operation were the distinguishing qualities of Soviet tank armament.

Soviet artillery and tank-gun designers are chiefly indebted to Stalin for their successes. He first pointed out the fallacy of the idea, prevailing in all countries during the 1930's, of developing a universal gun, and, in 1935, gave our designers precise and concrete instructions on the designing of guns to fit their combat purposes.

Stalin's special insight was shown in the choice of guns needed by the army. Long before World War II, there was a tendency toward howitzers in the armies of bourgeois countries. Stalin, profiting from the experience of the war which had begun in the West, stated in ample time that the importance of the long-barrelled gun should not be minimized.

Guided by Stalin's directives, Soviet artillery plants during World War II provided the army with the necessary quantities of guns of all types. At the beginning of the war Soviet tank guns already had the highest rate of fire and the greatest firepower in the world.

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Soviet tank and artillery technology successfully met the challenge of the German Tiger and Panther tanks and the Ferdinand self-propelled gun. Our antitank artillery increased in quality and quantity; our tank troops were equipped with modernized medium tanks and with the new heavy IS tanks with guns more powerful than those of the German tanks.

The firepower of the Soviet medium tank, the excellent visibility it provided, its mobility, armor protection, and other structural and operational features made it the best in the world. In the heavy tank class, the IS, in its firepower, maneuverability, and armor protection, excelled all others. Soviet tanks maintained their superiority throughout the war.

In the course of the war, our designers constructed an outstanding self-propelled gun mount, successfully solving the problem of mounting a gun on an already-existing (gotovyy) tank chassis. All the German efforts and experiments could not produce one to compare with it, not even the mighty Ferdinand.

An inventive spirit permeated the work of Soviet designers of tank armament. Petrov and Shpital'nyy, each a Hero of Socialist Labor, and Goryunov, Stalin Prize winner, achieved great successes. Along with increasing the muzzle velocity of tank guns, our designers improved the gun sights, greatly increasing their power of magnification. Instruments for observation from the tank were also steadily improved, both in facility of all-around observation and in the quality of the image.

Improvements in mechanisms for aiming both tank guns and machine guns greatly increased their accuracy of fire and decreased the delay in opening fire.

Soviet designers developed a special antiaircraft mount for the heavy machine gun, and fitted the latter with a satisfactory antiaircraft collimator sight, making it possible for our tanks to defend themselves against low-flying enemy aircraft.

In addition to advances in design of armament, our industry has improved methods of planning and manufacture of tank armament, organizing the planning process in close cooperation with technology.

Advanced methods of planning and manufacture of such armament, based on socialist principles of the organization of industry, assure new successes in the development of Soviet tank technology.

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